Draft Manifesto for the NDP
Submitted by the Ontario Left Caucus

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Preamble

Fifty years ago, the founders of our movement gathered in Regina and proclaimed their dedication to a Cooperative Commonwealth. In ringing terms, they set out their alternative to the grinding poverty, stark injustice and stormclouds of war that confronted their generation:

"We aim to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent injustice and inhumanity, by a social order from which the domination and exploitation of one class by another will be eliminated, in which economic planning will supersede unregulated private enterprise and competition, and in which genuine democratic self-government, based on economicequality, will be possible."

Today, despite all the vows that a social crisis like the Depression of the 1930's would never happen again, the world is in the grips of an even more dangerous social, economic and political crisis. Mass unemployment is already a reality. Labour rights, our whole range of health and social services, are under fierce attack. Humanity itself is threatened with destruction from the nuclear war drive fuelled by international militarism. Never have we stood in greater need of fundamental solutions.

The Liberals and Conservatives offer nothing but wait-and-see platitudes and policies that punish the population for the crimes of an economic system. Only the NDP offers a way out. In this era, socialism promises more than an ideal. It promises to be the only answer to the pressing challenges before us.

The NDP *(New Democratic Party, founded in 1961),* like the CCF before it *(Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, precursor to the NDP, founded in 1932),* is itself the creation and inheritance of the struggles of successive generations of workers and farmers, who realized that their aspirations for a humane society could never be met within the framework of a capitalist Canada. In contrast to the Liberals and Conservatives who are the parties of the major corporations and vested interests, the NDP remains the party of working people and their allies.

Our goal is a socialist Canada, a new social order based on common ownership of our resources and industry, cooperation, production for use and genuine democracy. Only socialism can turn the boundless potential of our people and resources to the creation of a world free from tyranny, greed, poverty and exploitation.

The World Economic Crisis

Canadians live and work in a world dominated by multinational corporate monopolies. These farflung business empires, of a scope and size unimaginable to previous generations, treat the entire planet as their domain. They are a law unto themselves, free to roam the globe in search of cheaper labour, more exploitable resources, more pliant governments and greater profits.

In collaboration with Canadian capitalists, successive Liberal and Conservative governments have put themselves at the service of these largely U.S.-based cartels. They now hold the power of life and death over every region and industry in our country. By their dictates, our resources have been plundered, our manufacturing capability denied. Canadian workers are their pawns in a global game of mergers, shutdowns, and relocations. These U.S. conglomerates have robbed us of our wealth and of the very power to determine our own future.

Massive world-wide unemployment and hunger are the legacy of these profiteering monopolies. Incapable of turning their technology and organization to the needs of people, they are collapsing under the weight of their hoarded wealth. They have distorted the economic development of the world so fundamentally — the resources they waste on war production, for instance, could eliminate hunger in the world — that world "markets" are glutted. Factories, shops and offices operate at half and three-quarters of their ability, while the world waits in need of the goods they could produce. There are no new frontiers for the multinationals. On the contrary, the crisis will only deepen. The micro-computer revolution will only intensify massive permanent unemployment, tedious and stressful jobs for remaining workers, and terrifying concentrations of knowledge and control in the hands of private corporations.

The central question posed by microtechnology, as by the multinational monopolies, is political. What kind of society do we want to create with the most powerful extensions of human labour and intelligence since the industrial revolution? If harnessed to popular administration and planning, microtechnology could help us achieve an era of abundance for all, release us from monotonous toil and enrich our store of accessible information.

The socialist option is the only alternative. Deepening of the world economic crisis is inevitable as long as profits dictate the course of humanity.

Social Ownership: The Only Solution

Canada is confronted by a political, social and economic emergency that demands straight-forward solutions. If we are going to stamp out unemployment, secure our independence from the multinationals and steel ourselves for sweeping technological change, we need a socialist industrial strategy based on public ownership of the decisive sectors of the economy. The flaws of capitalism are too basic, the power of the corporations too great, the chasm separating the compulsions of profit and the needs of people too wide, for anything less to succeed.

The half-measures of a mixed economy dominated by big business cannot meet the challenge. The stock-in-trade of government intervention — tinkering with monetary and fiscal policy to stimulate investment and spending — has proven bankrupt. Welfare state policies such as "progressive taxation" and unemployment insurance, though won by hard struggles, have done nothing to correct deep-seated structures of regional and social inequality. Legislative reforms, aimed at the most blatant abuses of corporate power, are faltering. In these harsh economic times, corporations hold governments to ransom through their control of desperately needed investment. Even reform-minded governments have buckled under this pressure, and passed vicious legislation, slashing social services and trampling the basic rights of workers.

Capitalism has failed, and so have efforts to reform it. That failure puts a campaign for the socialist alternative on the immediate agenda.

New Democratic Party governments will replace corporate ownership with social ownership of the major firms in the manufacturing, resource, finance, transportation and communications industries. Only then can we plan for full employment, social equality and economic democracy.

Socially-owned banks and insurance companies will ensure that peoples' savings serve the people. These savings will be mobilized for massive job-creating projects in critical areas such as housing and social services. To create new wealth, a socialist government will call a halt to the U.S. drain on our natural resources and use these resources as building blocks for a rounded industrial economy. To correct a disastrous balance of payments and create new jobs, we will break from our dependency on foreign multinationals and establish our own manufacturing capability in heavy industry and high-technology equipment.

Economic Democracy

The needs of people, not profit, are the driving force of a socialist society. This wholesale reconstruction cannot be accomplished by crown corporations that perpetuate management privileges. It will be accomplished by democratizing all levels of society, and by making workers' control the touchstone of industrial relations.

Under capitalism, labour is a commodity. Workers are used as replaceable parts, extentions of machines — as long as they provide dividends. Employers use their power of ownership to devastate the lives of workers through layoffs, shutdowns and neglect of health and safety. Unions, despite their courageous efforts, have encountered difficulties eliminating even the worst abuses of management power.

Socialism will dissolve the economic foundation of one-sided management privilege by relying on the needs and creativity of people. At the centrepiece of any NDP program will be the goal of enhancing the power that people can exercise over their own lives. This includes the passage of work environment laws to expand the scope and strength of collective agreements, giving workers decisive weight in every level of decision making, and ensuring that control over workers' pensions is placed in the hands of their elected union representatives. We believe in the ability of working people to manage their own productive institutions democratically.

Women's Rights

The modern Canadian women's movement has inspired us to renew and extend the socialist commitment to a society free from sexual discrimination.

Women remain the oppressed sex in Canada. Sexual discrimination is not only tolerated, it is entrenched at every level of society.

Years of piecemeal reform and dead letter laws have left women stranded in dead-end jobs at dead-end rates of pay. Loosely worded, poorly enforced equal pay laws and equal rights codes provide little protection for women at work. There are virtually no laws to protect women from the unemployment that is slated for them with the introduction of microtechnology.

Beyond the workplace, women's basic rights are continually denied. Hospitals and governments still interfere with a woman's basic right to make her own decision about maternity. Women are left to shoulder the major responsibility of childcare, because daycare facilities are

inadequate and under-funded. Violence makes victims of women in the home and in the community.

By taking the profit out of discrimination, a socialist society will take a crucial step towards women's rights. In cooperation with the independent women's movement, NDP governments will place top priority on legislation to guarantee equal pay for work of equal value, and affirmative action to promote women in areas where centuries of systematic discrimination must be overcome. Universal quality daycare will be established, either by extending the school system or funding local parent-child centres. Emergency shelters for battered wives will be funded by government, not charity. In recognition of women's inalienable rights to control their own bodies, funds will be allocated to birth control research, education, and to free-standing abortion clinics. The choice of maternity rests with a woman, in consultation with her doctor. Laws and hospital regulations that deny access to safe abortions will be repealed.

The Crisis of Federation

After 116 years of Confederation, we have not resolved the most pressing issues of federalism. We have not overcome the injustices of centuries-old conquests. We have not taken control of the levers of independent economic and cultural development. We have allowed corporations to treat East, West and North as resource hinterlands, to scar them with boom and bust development that leaves behind only a wealth of regional resentment.

The present constitution with its loopholed charter of individual rights cannot deal with problems of this magnitude. A renewed commitment to democracy and independence can. The crisis of Canadian nationhood can only be resolved on a basis of self-determination and equality of its peoples and regions.

An NDP government will guarantee full rights to self-determination to the Quebec and Native nationalities. We will guarantee and extend the linguistic rights of long-established francophone communities outside Quebec. We will abolish the Senate and Governor-Generalship as patronage-infested relics of the aristocratic age. We will establish an independent economy which the working people of Canada will control. We will extend that independence to the world of culture.

We will extend that control to regions, through decentralized planning, that puts an end to the tribute to Ottawa, Toronto and New York.

Peace and World Justice

Canada must establish a new and independent foreign policy to join the worldwide battle for peace and economic justice. In alliance with other international movements — for disarmament in the first world, for democracy in the second world, and for equality and national liberation in the third world — we can help tilt the balance that is now pushing the world toward nuclear annihilation. Such solidarity is only possible if we establish an independent economy, free from the dictates of the U.S. military-industrial complex, free to enjoy a world economic order based on cooperation rather than exploitation.

For decades, the world has endured a balance of nuclear terror based on the supposed deterrent value of mutual assured destruction. That balance now rests on a hair trigger that could be brushed at any moment by the use of first-strike weapon systems. These weapons are designed primarily to re-establish U.S. supremacy through the threat of "winnable" nuclear war.

These weapons are the centrepiece of U.S.-dominated alliances such as NATO and NORAD. Canadian membership in these organizations places us in the front lines of responsibility for the production, testing and launching of nuclear missiles. A breakaway from these organizations and establishment of a nuclear weapons free zone in Canada could place us on the front lines of those fighting for a new world order.

We are dedicated to a world in which all nations renounce the use of nuclear weapons — a world based on the twin pillars of disarmament and economic justice. Both are preconditions of the other. Multi-billion dollar budgets now wasted on the war drive could wipe out world hunger and illiteracy in one year. To play a part in the creation of such a world, Canada needs an independent foreign policy and an economic order that rejects production for war.

An NDP Government in Power

A New Democratic Party government will seek to give political power to unorganized and organized working people, to farmers, women, students and all groups subjected to national oppression. A New Democratic Party government will develop a plan to legislate the key elements of its democratically determined program as the first step towards transforming Canada into a socialist society. Such a government will seek to educate and mobilize in defence of its legislative program against entrenched power blocs that may seek to thwart the will of the majority.

The New Democratic Party Left Caucus commits itself to a program based on the following objectives as priorities:

1. Public ownership of the decisive sectors of the economy and, in particular, of the resource, finance, manufacturing, transportation and communication sectors, to permit the development of an independent economy, production for use, economic planning and industrial democracy.

2. The development of a comprehensive industrial strategy dedicated to full employment. Massive public work programs and a shorter work week for the same takehome pay will be key elements in establishing everyone's right to a job.

3. The development of a comprehensive social strategy to eliminate poverty in Canada. Such a strategy will include minimum wages corresponding to basic levels of need, indexed pensions, disability and welfare allowances.

4. Full support for the rights of labour, including the abolition of all legislation limiting free collective bargaining, the encouragement of unionization, the safeguarding of the right to strike and to refuse unsafe work and the right to negotiate technological change.

5. Full support for the demands of the women's movement. In particular, we will promote affirmative action programs, establish the right of women to control their own bodies and to be paid equally for work of equal value as decisive measures to lead towards the realization of guaranteed equality in all social, economic and legal matters to women.

6. Legislation to guarantee the extension of fundamental human rights to all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or physical or mental disability.

7. The constitutional extension of full democratic rights including the dismantling of undemocratic political institutions such as the Senate and reform of the patronage-ridden judicial system. We will undertake to pass legislation establishing democratic civilian control of police forces.

8. The right of self-determination for the Québécois and Native peoples.

9. Free, universal access to all levels of education from daycare to university.

10. Protection of the family-based farm. Special measures to break the power of the bankers and agri-business processors will include easy access to credit, encouragement of cooperatives and rationalized food production through producer-controlled marketing agencies.

11. Encouragement of an independent Canadian culture through measures guaranteeing funding and distribution rights for Canadian cultural workers and measures to offset U.S. domination of distribution rights in the theatre and magazine industries.

12. Protection of our environment from unacceptable and unnecessary pollutants such as acid rain, nuclear and toxic wastes and the creation of a policy that promotes safe and renewable energy sources.

13. An international policy reflecting a commitment to peace, global justice, the end of the nuclear arms race, and the declaration of a nuclear-weapons free zone in Canada.

14. An independent foreign policy for Canada which will no longer be dictated by the U.S. military system. An NDP government will immediately withdraw draw from NATO and NORAD and promote the international antiwar and disarmament movements.

The New Democratic Party is the party of the dispossessed and oppressed struggling to build a new world. We are both a social movement and a political party.

As a social movement, we support all struggles against the injustices of capitalism. Unions — together with popular organizations fighting for world peace, social equality and environmental safety — are the life-blood of our movement. As a political party, we seek to become a government that can implement legislation to meet the needs of working people.

We do not offer just a blueprint to a better future. We offer an invitation to all Canadians to join us, as we join them, in our common efforts to eradicate a social system based on exploitation, discrimination, poverty and war. The capitalist system must be replaced by socialist democracy. That is the burning issue of our era, the only hope of humanity.

(union "bug" Local 15 ITU)